

**MEMORIAL**

OF THE

**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF NEW YORK,**

ADVERSE TO THE BILL FOR ALTERING THE

**DUTIES ON IMPORTS.**

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FEBRUARY 19, 1827.

Printed by order of the Senate of the United States.

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WASHINGTON :

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18th Congress  
2d Session

MINUTES

OF THE

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF NEW YORK

ADJOURNED BY THE HILL FOR ATTENDING THE

DOCTORS ON IMPORTS

February 10, 1827.

Printed by order of the Senate of the United States

WASHINGTON

PRINTED BY G. S. BROWN

1827

*To the Honorable the Senate of the United States :*

The New York Chamber of Commerce has seen, with extreme regret, that a bill has passed the House of Representatives "for the alteration of the acts imposing duties on imports," and is now before your honorable body. They feel deeply affected by the principles of this bill, which they believe are subversive of the best interests of the nation.

This bill, under the pretext of altering acts imposing duties on imports, does, in effect, prohibit the importation of some kinds of woollen goods, and imposes an enormous duty on other kinds, all of which are essential to the comfort, if not to the existence, of the inhabitants of this climate. The duties which it imposes being calculated on the square yard, and, with reference to arbitrary minimum prices, will be found to be graduated from 40 per cent. to 220 per cent. on the first cost, making, with the addition of the premium of exchange and other charges of importation, a premium of  $62\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. to  $242\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in favor of similar articles manufactured in the United States; and it ought to be especially noticed, that the cheaper kinds of woollen goods, those which are worn by the poor and by the laboring classes, will, by this bill, pay the highest, and those consumed by the wealthy, the lowest duties. The attention of the Senate is also respectfully requested to the inequality, as well as the excessive rate of the proposed duties. The usual ad valorem principle on which duties have been collected is abandoned, and minimum rates of forty cents, one dollar and fifty cents, two dollars and fifty cents, and four dollars, are respectively established as the cost prices. It follows of course, that while the article which is rated at forty cents the square yard pays a duty of  $14\frac{2}{3}$  cents, the article which costs more than forty cents, even if the increase is no more than a single cent. will pay 55 cents the square yard, and while the article rated at one dollar and fifty cents the yard will have to pay 55 cents, that which costs one dollar and fifty-one cents will have to pay 93 cents the square yard. This short detail will show the true nature of this bill, and, at the same time, lead to the conclusion, that, while its prohibitory and enormously excessive duties will materially diminish the national revenue, the execution of the law must be attended with numerous frauds and evasions.

If there existed any public necessity for the enactment of this bill, and it violated no principle of true policy, your memorialists, onerous as are its provisions, would not complain; but they can perceive no sufficient reason to justify further encouragement to the industry of the manufacturing classes. Woollen fabrics imported at the present time have to pay an aggregate of charges amounting to nearly 56 per centum on the first class; this is a premium paid by the consumer to the home manufacturer, and if the business of the latter cannot succeed without a greater bounty, it had better be abandoned. The encouragement given by the tariff of 1824, induced many wealthy individuals to withdraw their capitals from commerce, in which they had

been previously employed, and to vest them in great manufacturing companies. These are managed by Presidents, Directors, Treasurers, &c. and at an expense which prevents them from competing with individuals manufacturing on their own account; hence arises the application to the national legislature, which has resulted in the bill before your honorable body. Should it become a law in its present shape, the evils which are now felt would be increased; new combinations would be formed in favor of new protecting duties, and new monopolies, more odious and oppressive than that which is now proposed, would be applied for, and perhaps obtained.

Your memorialists are not unfriendly to the manufacturing interest, nor would they lay a single burden on it from which other interests are exempted; but they object to that exclusive legislation which selects and fosters a particular class; they claim equal advantages to all. The enterprises of the merchant, which result in filling the public treasury, are not less meritorious than the exertions of the manufacturer; nor can the latter claim any merit superior to that which belongs to the grower of those great staples of our country, which form the bulk of our export trade, and which contribute so much to the welfare and extension of our commerce and navigation.

Your memorialists have ever believed that the national constitution was formed to establish a Government for the common benefit, and that it gave to every member of the confederacy equal rights and privileges. *To establish harmony, and to promote the general good, are emphatically its objects.* Laws which give to one class of citizens exclusive advantages at the expense of other classes, which lay heavy burdens on some districts where manufactures cannot exist, to promote manufacturing in other districts; and which, according to the policy of the British corn laws, protect the *wool grower* and the *wool manufacturer* against foreign competition, at the expense of the consumer, are not consistent with the spirit of that great national compact under which we have hitherto been a happy and united people, and have advanced, with unexampled celerity, to national power and greatness.

Your memorialists indulge the hope that an impartial and enlightened attention to the local circumstances and the rights of every part of the United States, will induce your honorable body to reject the bill now before you. We look, with anxious solicitude, to the decision of the Senate on this momentous subject. Should this bill become a law, it may perhaps be considered, in some parts of our country, as having been passed under the influence of sectional feelings, and as bearing hard upon sectional interests. And if such opinions should prevail, may they not tend to foster jealousies between the different States, withdraw their affections from the General Government, and put to hazard the tranquillity of the Union?

And your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

By order of the New York Chamber of Commerce.

ROBERT LENOX, *President.*

JOHN PINTARD, *Secretary.*

New York, 15th February, 1827.